



**City of Missoula, Montana
City Council Committee Agenda Item**

Committee: Budget and Finance

Item: Approval of UDC, Developer Street Tree Mitigation Payment Fee

Date: April 22, 2026

Sponsor(s): Ben Carson, Morgan Valliant

Department or function: Parks and Recreation

Prepared by: Ben Carson

Ward(s) Affected:

☐ Ward 1	☐ Ward 4
☐ Ward 2	☐ Ward 5
☐ Ward 3	☐ Ward 6
☒ All Wards	☐ N/A

Action Required:

Approval and adoption of a right of way improvement, street tree mitigation payment fee in the amount of \$1025 per tree.

Recommended Motion(s):

April 27, 2026

I move the City Council set a public hearing for May 11, 2026, to consider the resolution and adoption of a fee of \$1025 (One thousand, twenty-five dollars) per tree, Right of Way Improvement, street tree mitigation option (1) detailed in Article 6.2.01-A, 5 of The City of Missoula Unified Development Code.

May 18, 2026

I move the City Council: Approve and adopt a fee of \$1025 (One thousand, twenty-five dollars) per tree, to facilitate the Right of Way Improvement, street tree mitigation option (1) detailed in Article 6.2.01-A, 5 of The City of Missoula Unified Development Code.

Timeline:

Committee discussion:	4-22-2026
Council action (or sets hearing):	4-27-2026
Public Hearing (if required):	5-11-26
Deadline:	5-18-26

Background and Alternatives Explored:

Traditionally, completion of right of way improvements adjacent to recently developed parcels, prior to issuance of certificate of occupancy has been the responsibility of the developer or property owner. These improvements can prove to be difficult to achieve during certain times of year, and trees planted as part of these improvements have had higher than desirable mortality rates the years post-planting. Due to similar difficulties with tree mortality, Missoula Redevelopment Agency (MRA) and Missoula Public Works and Mobility(PWM) have both entered into MOU's with Missoula Urban Forestry for tree planting services. These agreements have been put into place to help ensure appropriate species selection, adherence to industry best

management practices, and increase the potential for long term tree health. The recently adopted Unified Development Code offers a similar service to developers/builders. Article 6.2.01-A-5, provides 3 options for developers to meet the required right of way improvements that are associated with completion of each developed parcel.

The pertinent Option1, allows the developer or property owner to select the following:

Option 1

- a. The developer or property owner may make a street tree mitigation payment at the time of building permit for boulevard tree planting, establishment, tree maintenance (including supplemental watering) for the first 2 years after planting, and a 2-year warranty.
- b. After a certificate of occupancy has been issued the city will plant the required street trees.
- c. Boulevard tree planting will not be linked to the certificate of occupancy, and a boulevard landscaping permit is not required.
- d. Other boulevard landscaping improvements such as soil, irrigation and turf remain the responsibility of the developer or property owner.

This will not only ensure that each tree is set up to succeed in each planting location, but it will also expedite developer's ability to close out completion of each parcel, reduce or eliminate the need for issuance of temporary certificates of occupancy, and allow the new owners of the parcel to occupy the property sooner and with less procedural burden. The dollar amount that is recommended for this fee has been based on current wholesale tree prices, previous costs to contractually plant trees in rights of way, tree protection/establishment material costs, estimated staff time to care for the tree for 2 years, and estimated costs associated with sourcing each tree and managing planting contracts. This recommended fee is the same dollar amount specified in each of the MOU's between MRA, PWM and Missoula Urban Forestry. Developers/property owners are not required to select this option for tree planting and instead may opt to plant the trees themselves prior to issuance of a certificate of occupancy by the city. There has been significant interest in the option to transfer planting responsibilities to the city from the development/builder community. This new option for tree planting may prove to not only increase the chances for successful tree establishment but also help to simplify the process for all parties involved.

Financial Implications:

The proposed fee of \$1025 per tree planted will allow for purchase of an appropriately sized tree from a wholesale nursery, contracted tree planting including staking and deer fencing, 2 years of post-planting care, and a \$25 per tree administrative fee for tree procurement and contract management.

Links to external websites:

Unified Development Code Link:

<https://www.engagemissoula.com/23541/widgets/109901/documents/78602>